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Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 04488 090813Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 CTME-00 AID-05
SS-15 STR-07 ITC-01 TRSE-00 ICA-11 SP-02 SOE-02
OMB-01 DOE-15 /136 W
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R 090630Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3497
INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PERTH
AMCONSUL SYDNEY

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USMTN

USOECD

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: ETRD, AS
SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN FORMULA TARIFF REDUCTION

REF: CANBERRA 04286

1. SUMMARY: WITH GREAT FANFARE, ACTING PRIME MINISTER ANTHONY ANNOUNCED JUNE 8 IN PARLIAMENT THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD OFFER AT THE MTN A TARIFF-CUTTING FORUMLA EMBODYING A 40 PERCENT REDUCTION. AS PREDICTED REFTEL, HOWEVER, AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DID NOT BITE THE BULLET, AND PROPOSAL CONTAINS LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE. END SUMMARY.
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PAGE 02 CANBER 04488 090813Z

2. AUSTRALIAN ADOPTION OF 40 PERCENT FORMULA TARIFF REDUCTION, WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED JUNE 8 BY ACTING PRIME MINISTER ANTHONY, INCLUDES AS PART OF THE 40 PERCENT OFFER THE UNILATERAL 25 PERCENT TARIFF CUT INTRODUCED IN 1973 BY WHITLAM GOVERNMENT. AUSTRLIAN OFFER TO MAKE THIS 40 PERCENT CUT IS, HOWEVER, CONDITIONED UPON RECIPROCITY FOR ENTIRE CUT, INCLUDING 25

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

PERCENT CUT OF 1973.

3. IN ADDITION, EXCLUDED FROM OFFER WILL BE THOSE PRODUCTS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY BENEFICIARIES OF TEMPORARY PROTECTION, OR WHICH IN FUTURE BECOME BENEFICIARIES. AMONG THE MAJOR PRODUCTS EXCLUDED BY THIS PROVISION WILL BE PASSENGER MOTOR VEHICLES, CLOTHING AND TEXTILES, AND WHITE GOODS SUCH AS REFRIGERATORS AND WASHING MACHINES.

4. RECIPROCITY WHICH AUSTRALIA REQUIRES WILL CONSIST IN LARGE PART OF ACCESS TO INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES' MARKETS FOR AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

5. CUTS WILL BE PHASED IN OVER PERIOD OF YEARS STARTING ABOUT 1984 OR 1985.

6. TO QUOTE ANTHONY, "SUBJECT TO FULL RECIPROCITY AND APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDS AUSTRALIA WILL OFFER TO NEGOTIATE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INDUSTRIAL TARIFF FORMULA." IN OTHER WORDS, AUSTRALIA IS WILLING TO DISCUSS REDUCTIONS EQUAL TO 15 PERCENT OF PRE-1973 TARIFF LEVEL ON A LIMITED NUMBER OF ITEMS WHERE IMPORTANT COMPETITION FOR LOCAL INDUSTRY IS NOT SUBSTANTIAL, PROVIDED CUTS ARE DEFERRED TILL 1984 OR LATER AND PROVIDED THAT RECIPROCITY, MOSTLY FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, EQUAL IN VALUE TO 40 PERCENT OF PRE-1973 TARIFF LEVEL IS EXTENDED.
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7. DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND RESOURCES IS PRESENTLY WORKING TO IDENTIFY PRODUCTS TO BE INCLUDED IN OFFER. IN VIEW OF TREMENDOUS PRESSURES OF TIME, IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT PRODUCTS WILL NOT BE ANALYZED IN ANY DEPTH, AND IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF THERE WAS A TENDENCY TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION IN PUTTING PRODUCTS ONTO THE OFFER LIST.
SQUIRE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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